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Address of
President Ethelbert D. Warfield

AT THE ANNUAL DINNER
OF THE

Philadelphia Alumni Association

MARCH 5, 1914



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ADDRESS OF
PRESIDENT ETHELBERT D. WARFIELD

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PHILADELPHIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

March 5, 1914.

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

I am deeply sensible of the warmth and cordiality of the reception which you have accorded me. Nor is it less grateful that it is a familiar experience. For more than twenty years I have sat with you at your board, shared your fellowship and felt the tie of a common devotion. I have come to you confident of a hearty and helpful hearing. I have gone away cheered and heartened for my daily task.

Very precious is the birthright. Yet the spirit of adoption is so strong that I have come to feel that I am native here and to the manner born. If you cannot teach an old dog new tricks, there is still a fascination in the service of a man's own choice. If another cheer made my heart to leap, and the melody of another "Alma Mater" my pulses to tingle, in my college days, I have long ago learned to know the spell that binds you to "the dear old College on the hill." She has taught me the lesson I would have you all to learn—of love through service. To her I have given the best I have had to

NOTE.—This address has been written out at the request of the Alumni Association from the notes used when it was delivered. It is not, of course, exactly as spoken.

give. As Browning said of the land to which he gave so richly:

"Open my heart and you shall see
Graven inside of it—Italy;"

so if I were to open my heart to you tonight you would find inscribed within it—Lafayette.

The reason the lessons of college life are so indelible is that, like those of early childhood, they are "learned by heart." They are the source of the memories which spring unbidden to the brain. And they are wisest whose minds respond most readily to the prompting of their hearts. So when I am asked by the ignorant multitude where Lafayette College is, I am wont to answer, in the hearts of those who love her. It was the Boston girl, you will remember, who insisted that Boston was not a locality, but a state of mind. A college, even today, may not wholly neglect the intellectual. So I should be justified in saying that Lafayette is in the minds of those whom she has taught to think. In the minds indeed, but even more in the hearts of you who tonight are thinking of her as your hearts direct—with a great, over-mastering, all-compelling love.

But Lafayette is more than an emotion, more than a thought—she is now actually on the map.

A short time ago I received from the noble Frenchman who three years ago made a tour of America in the interest of the great cause of arbitration, the delightful record of his journey. The map which accompanies the volume marks his itinerary from Washington to the Golden Gate and back again to Lafayette Collège. I sought

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in vain for Easton. The penetrating mind of the noble traveler saw that apart from the College the town was inconsiderable. And in great red letters on the map the truly significant spot greets the eye. The day that Baron d'Estournelles de Constant came to see the noblest monument that grateful America has reared to the memory of his gallant countryman, was indeed a "red-letter" day—a glorious day, just when the promise of the spring was ripening into the fulfilment of summer. And as he charmed us with his delightful personality and led us willing captives with his persuasive words I marked with secret joy his responsive spirit fall under the spell of Lafayette. As it was with him, a little earlier it had been with the Count de Lafayette, who making a commencement visit, cried out with the enthusiasm of his race: "Why this is magnificent. You should not call it a college. You should call it a university."

But it is not in a name, any more than in a locality; that the spell of Lafayette is to be sought and found. With prophetic love Junkin looked across the years and knew it as fully as we know it now. In a day of fuller material resources, with a poignant devotion, Cattell lived beneath its power and wrought in its strength. It is directing the efforts of hundreds of men tonight, the scholar in his study, the physician by the sick-bed, the chemist in the glare of the blast furnace, the missionary in the crowded city of China or the loneliness of the African jungle.

The essential element in it is that undefinable but unmistakable thing that we call manhood, "the one immortal

thing beneath time's changeful sky." How it enobles our mortality! And splendid as it is we have it in every gathering such as this. Does it not glow in the men who have made this association such a power? Not in vain has Philadelphia been called The City of Brotherly Love when it has given to Lafayette such trustees as Eckard and Hogg, Adamson and Radcliffe, Laird and Long. What rare initiative prompted Whitmer to undertake alone the endowment movement before which the whole college had stood abashed. What a service has the college rendered to society in giving a general manager to our greatest railroad which last year carried 111,000,000 passengers without the loss of a single life.

I would not cast the slightest shadow on this occasion. But while I am speaking of Lafayette manhood and the achievements of some of her sons, I may not omit a reference to one who in these last weeks has fought a good fight and come off victor. No soldier on the field of battle, no hero in the shock of war, was ever called upon to pass through a more fiery ordeal of pain than Andrew H. Reeder has just endured. With perfect courage, and that fine fortitude which is more than courage, he bore his own sufferings and sustained those near and dear to him by the steadfastness of his great heart. He proved himself, as in so many ways he had done before, worthy of Lafayette and of the name of Reeder so justly honored in his native town. To all her sons who do her credit in the walks of life the College brings a grateful mead of praise, but for such as he who uncomplaining and unafraid go down into the dark valley of death she keeps the victor's palm.

For manhood is the one immortal thing
Beneath Time's changeful sky,
And where it lightened once from age to age,
Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,
That length of days is knowing when to die.

"Beneath Time's changeful sky!" Ah, this changing world! How hard it is for those who are growing old to enter with understanding sympathy into the new world that is a-making. It is one of the tragedies of life that old and young, be they ever so dear to each other—father and son, teacher and taught—can never see this changing world from the same angle of vision. I sometimes think Kipling touched the keynote of the times when he said:

It's like a book I think, this blooming world,
Which we can read and care for just so long;
And presently we think that we shall die
Unless we get the page we're reading done
And turn another—likely not so good,
But what we're after is to turn 'em all.

I sometimes think so, yet it is not for us "to get the page we're reading done," but rather, in the words I put at the head of my inaugural address:

The old order changeth, giving place to new;
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

The elder poet strikes the truer chord. Hoarding each precious hour, let us labor to the end that through us God may fulfil himself.

Is it not true that beneath the eternal ebb and flow there are yet more eternal things that abide secure? Certainly this is so in education. Of two things I am

ever more deeply and profoundly persuaded. The first is that the old ideal of a college education as a union of intellectual training and spiritual culture is sound; and the second is that it is through work, constant, absorbing, dominating, intellectual labor that the College alone can justify itself to those who endow it and to those who entrust their children to it.

Intellectual training and spiritual culture! Do not interchange the adjectives. Intellectual culture is the ripened fruit; College training but the first plowing of the soil. Put in a strong sub-soil plow and break the ground in great deep furrows. If there be wealth below find it, turn it up. The thin soils will not stand it to be sure. But what wealth of manhood goes undeveloped because we do not strike deep enough, do not give strong minds hard work to do. For myself I believe in the old classical education. As has been well said: "Time is money, loose cash in your pockets; but brains are capital. And there is not a better investment for them than a good sound classical education." But whether classical or modern, scientific or literary, let the education try out the mind and train the man to think. I was brought up on a Kentucky stock-farm and I early observed that trotting bred colts naturally took to trotting, and pointer pups to pointing. I think the young of *homo sapiens* should early take to thinking—to thinking, and to thinking thoughts that are worth while, "high thoughts, true thoughts, thoughts fit to treasure up." The stately movements of the greater thoughts of science, literature, philosophy, cannot be mastered but by long-continued

and persistent work keyed to the measure of a lifetime's love.

What happiness there is in such work. We are conscious of the joy of the youth with the muscles all a-ripple down his back who strips for the contests of the grid-iron or the track. But what of him whose daily task not only gives exercise to the noblest faculties of man, but yields an ever-widening prospect of this world and now and again sees a new planet swim into his ken. Have you forgotten the day that through the none too transparent medium of a battered old school-book you for the first time caught a glimpse of the topless towers of Ilium? Cannot some of you recall the magic hour when for you Shakespeare ceased to be a mere writer of plays and became a comrade capable of love? I speak of the joy of the work, but I cannot conceal the fuller joy of the reward of it all—a mind, a heart, a life, disciplined and informed, filled with great memories and allured by greater hopes.

It was such work that gave birth to the great tradition of College life—its fruitful leisure, its stirring repose. The old spirit put the education above the degree, the thing itself above any of its uses. So the old fashioned merchant took a greater pride in the character and standing of his "house" than he did in the fortune it brought him. Now our boys make haste to get wise in the same spirit in which they make haste to get rich. And with this change has come a failure to discriminate the equipment of the man for the greatest of all adventures—the living of a life—from the training of the same man

for one of the many activities of that life. With this change scholarship has fallen into small repute and the student who devotes himself to intellectual pursuits with all his might is not appreciated by his fellows. Indeed, a whole vocabulary of contemptuous terms has been coined to express the self-satisfied ignorance of bumptious boyhood. But this can be left to correct itself. Wisdom is still justified of her children. The pity of it is that a whole generation of youth is growing up in the belief that mediocrity is a virtue, and that success in life is rather the result of luck than of learning.

Of course there is no lack of those who insist upon work. It is intellectual work that is so lightly esteemed. Yet that is the very thing that is indispensable. The College as distinguished from every kind of vocational school stands for nothing else. Most of the professional schools are requiring more and more years of College work for admission. The technical schools lag behind precisely because they fail to discriminate intellectual effort from mere work. Fortunately, the men of finest intelligence in the technical callings have done for themselves what no institution can do unaided, and have achieved intellectual culture. Unfortunately, many of them seem to have concluded that it can only be a gift of the gods. The time must come when all the great professional schools will insist upon a more thorough intellectual training for admission. The first step must be the recognition that the most important instrument of scientific research is a well trained mind.

As for spiritual training, the College is not the place for it. That should be done at home. The College has a right to expect that the boys and girls shall have been taught to know their Bibles, and such trifles as the shorter catechism (or the Heidelberg, or some other)—not to lie, or cheat in examinations, and such other rudiments—before they enter College. But the College is the place for spiritual culture. Do you not know how those godly men of old Coffin and Porter and March yearned over you and desired to open to you not only the sciences of Physics and Botany and Language but the mystery of godliness, yea, the whole art of the Christian life? I fear some of you then, as some of the boys of today, thought those noble men hard taskmasters and refused to open to them the way into your hearts. It is the bitterness of life that love does not always find the way. Nevertheless, we must be true to the old faith and place in the chairs of our College men who are seekers after God and also after the hearts of youth.

The distinguished gentleman who has left the Senate to honor us with his presence this evening knows how great a place in the discussions of the time is held by the idea of *Conservation*. We hear a great deal about the conservation of our mines, of our forests, of all our natural resources. I am interested in the conservation of the greatest of our national treasures—the conservation of our boys. You remember that Bob Burdette used to say that “the dear girls just spread their wings and float up the marble staircase that leads to life’s vaulted halls. And the dear boys—do they spread their wings and float

up? No. 'They just shoulder their feet and fall up!' Verily they blunder into life, and some, alas! out of it. And there are plenty of people to help them do it. Even parents have lost much of the old solicitude for a simple life nobly lived. As one mother said the other day: "All I want for my child is just four happy years in College." Four happy years! Years of full enjoyment of unearned pleasures. Harvest before seed-time. Such parents do not seem to stop to think what is good for boys. They are fearful of colds and football and study. They like to see their dear boys at tango teas, in the cast of light comedies, and among the most popular fellows in the idle set. Not thus are sturdy lads made into strong men. Such is not the ideal of our race, still less the realization of our faith. When God sent His son into the world to show men what a real man was like He set him at the carpenter's bench. When he had learned the great lesson of a large life in a lowly sphere, He sent him to preach a divine philosophy to hungry hearts that had learned to know that man cannot live by bread alone. When he had shown the world the heavenly beauty of humble toil, and the supremest glory of human thought and speech, He taught the last great lesson that only in sacrifice is labor and love made perfect, and nailed him to the cross of Calvary. From that hour it grows ever plainer to those that think, that the highest happiness comes through the hardest work. The task well done is the student's source of truest joy. The best College is and ever will be that in which the best work is done.

A popular novelist has made one of his cleverest crea-

tions say: "You young men of the present day make me tired! You all seem to think that larks ought to fall ready roasted into your mouth. There's not a blessed thing in this world worth having without sacrifice. The big people, the people that have the big things in life are those that have paid or are prepared to pay the big price for them."

Here democracy and aristocracy are reconciled in a common effort sifting the capable from the incapable, the men who will from the men who won't. Here is where the College that drops with judgment but without compunction the incompetent and the idle renders a public service. It is good for the College and it is good for the boys to drop those who will not come up to a high and ever-rising standard. The harder they are dropped the better. For those who have any resilience may then rebound into College with more purpose and more applause.

Not happiness in College, but happiness through College, is the phrase. For as Carlyle long ago said of life in general: "Our aim is not the greatest possible happiness but the greatest possible nobleness." That's the thought. Catch it and keep it. That's the aim our College cherishes for her sons: "Not the greatest possible happiness, but the greatest possible nobleness." Long may we abide in that high faith. Mazzini commenting on the thought has beautifully said:

"Pain and happiness, all fortune and good, are incidents of the journey. When the wind blows and the rain falls, the Traveler draws his cloak closer round, presses his hat on his head and prepares to fight the storm. Anon the storm leaves him, the sunshine

breaks the clouds and warms his frozen limbs: the Traveler smiles and blesses God. But do rain or sunshine change his journey's end?"

Neither rain nor sunshine shall change our journey's end. In good report and evil report we shall travel the road so well worn by many beloved feet. Let us look back a moment and recall what manner of men they were who taught us in travail and in tears to love the name of Lafayette. Then let us raise our faces to the dawning of a new and larger day and pledge our loyalty to the service of the College of our love and of our faith.



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